

# **Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum**

## **13<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

### **Attendance**

Members:

Alderman Brian Kingston (Chair)  
Councillor George Dorrian  
Councillor John Kyle (for Cllr Hutchinson)  
Councillor Seamus De Faoite (for Cllr Lyons)  
Councillor Mal O'Hara  
Councillor Emmett McDonagh–Brown (for Cllr Long)  
Councillor Ciaran Beattie  
Councillor Fiona Ferguson  
Alderman Sonia Copeland  
The Lord Mayor, Councillor Daniel Baker

Apologies: Cllrs Lyons, Long and Hutchinson

### **Officers:**

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive  
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources  
John Walsh, City Solicitor  
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services  
Alistair Reid, Director of Planning and Place  
John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy  
Lisa Caldwell, Head of Market and Corporate Communications  
Eimear Henry, Senior Manager – Culture and Tourism (Item 4)  
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

### **1. Motion – Dual Language Street Signage Policy**

The City Solicitor outlined the content of the report in respect of the notion of motion on Dual Language Street Signs Policy, which would be presented to the March meeting of the SP&R committee. Queries were raised in relation to the inclusion of a recommendation relating to a minimum response threshold. Councillor Beattie agreed to circulate to party group leaders the legal opinion that he had obtained on this matter in advance of the SP&R meeting.

### **2. Bilingual / Multilingual Leisure Centre Signage**

A report was circulated outlining various options in relation to language or languages to be used in leisure facilities with a city-wide catchment area. It was agreed that members would consider the report and provide feedback to the City Solicitor. The report would then be presented to SP&R Committee in April.

### **3. Inclusive Growth**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy reminded members that following approval of the draft Inclusive Growth Strategy a consultation process has taken place and the results of this would be presented to the March SP&R committee. This paper would also outline the resource required to deliver the strategy and seek approval to establish a core team. Members re-iterated their support for the strategy and asked that regular updates on progress are also brought to future committee meetings.

### **4. Cultural Multi Annual Grants**

Following queries at both City Growth and Regeneration Committee and full council, Eimear Henry clarified the position regarding the allocation of funding to Section 75 groups and a specific allocation to groups from PUL community, which would be brought to March SP&R. A full work programme for culture for the year ahead would then be taken to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in April.

### **5. VE day 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Events**

This matter had been discussed at Party Leaders Forum and a report will be brought to the March SP&R Committee.

### **6. Planning Update**

There were no significant planning related updates.

### **7. AOB**

#### **Bonfire Related Issue**

The Director of City & Neighbourhoods services provided an update on the bonfire related meeting with councillors and community representatives and members who were in attendance agreed that it was a useful and positive meeting. Following discussion it was agreed that all East Belfast Councillors would be invited to a meeting of the Bonfire Working Group which would consider issues in relation to a proposed bonfire at Avoneil.

#### **Quarter 3 Finance Re-allocations**

The Director of Finance and Resources informed the panel that the due diligence had been carried out in relation to the funding request from Compass and the £20,000 agreed at

March Council can be allocated to them. An update on the Boxing event will be provided to the SP&R committee.

The Director also updated the panel on possible financial implications of the Coronavirus which the finance team were working through. Members requested that discussions take place with DfC and DoF, through SOLACE and NILGA, on a possible financial package to local government to deal with Coronavirus.

## **8. Coronavirus**

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services provided an overview of the structures and plans that are being put in place to deal with Coronavirus, both in the council and at Northern Ireland level. He particularly highlighted the need to support the elderly and vulnerable people and also continue with the message around hand washing. It was recognised that it was a rapidly changing situation and the council needs to be in a position to respond and take decisions quickly.

The Lord Mayor agreed to call a special meeting of the Council on Friday 13 March 2020 at 6.00 pm and also to call further meetings as necessary. It was also agreed that the Party Leaders Consultative Forum would reconvene on Friday at 3.00 pm in advance of the special council meeting to receive the most up to date advice and information on the virus. The Lord Mayor will also be in attendance at this meeting.